1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4
GUARANI SM4

own eyes were he to see men, almost a hundred years old, leap on to a fiery horse, without the aid of a stirrup, like a boy of twelve years old, sit it for hours, and even whole days, beneath a burning sun, climb trees for honey, travel or lie upon the ground in cold or rainy weather, contend with the enemy in battle, shrink from no toils of the army or the chase, evince wonderful acuteness both of sight and hearing, preserve all their teeth quite sound, and seem only to be distinguished by the number of their years from men in the prime of life. All these things will hardly be credited in Europe where they are so rare. In the colonies of the Abipones I daily beheld old men, like youths in every other respect but that of age, without surprize. If a man dies at eighty he is lamented as if cut off in the flower of his age. Women generally live longer than men, because they are not killed in war, and because the moistness of their nature renders them more long lived. You find so many old women a hundred years of age, amongst the Abipones, that you may wonder at, but will scarce be able to count them. I cannot say that the pedestrian nations of Paraguay enjoy equal strength and longevity. The Guaranies, Lules, Isistines, Vilelas, and other pedestrian Indians, are subject to diseases like the Europeans, and

1 Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon
GUARANI 5174

165 both feel old age, and discover it by their habit
[164] of body. Their lives, like those of Europeans, are sometimes short, sometimes long. You find very few men a hundred years old, or even approaching to that age amongst them. It is worth while to investigate the causes of this exceeding vigour of the Abipones,

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
814 Abipon 814

GUARANI SM4

A 164 disease during the two last centuries, defy all G calculation. In the thirty Guarany towns some [165] thirty thousand persons died of the small-pox in the year 1734.

ooo It is not true that the Spaniards and other Europeans in America are exempted from small-pox; but it cannot be doubted that the Indians take it sooner, and more frequently die of it. I am of opinion that their habit of body has less strength to repel or overcome that poison. They generally eat half-raw and unsalted meat; they always go with their heads and feet bare; they drink nothing but water, and that not of the best kind, except at a few festive drinking parties in the course of the year; all which tend to weaken the stomach. The heat of the sun, and the constant use of maize, cause a ferment in their blood which, on the accession of small-pox, very frequently proves fatal. This must be understood of the pedestrian Indians only, for the Abipones, and other equestrian Indians, who do not labour under those A 164 miseries to which the pedestrians are subject, generally have the small-pox in a milder form.

G In the year 1765 this plague carried off great A numbers in the Spanish colonies. Having swept 731 away about twelve thousand persons in the thirty 165 Guarany towns, it spread to the distant hordes 164 of the savages scattered throughout Chaco, and

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4
GUARANI SM4

though almost all took the infection, yet few died in proportion to the number of the sick. I speak of the equestrians, who were saved by the strength of their constitutions. In the town which I founded for the Abipones, one woman only escaped the contagion, yet out of the many hundreds that took the disease, twenty alone fell victims to it.

Often no mention is made of the small-pox for many years amongst the Indians; but this calm is the sure forerunner of an approaching storm. We have always found the small pox break out first in the colonies of the Spaniards, and spread from thence to the farthest hordes of the Indians; who, having learnt from the experience of their ancestors, to dread this disease as their death, separate from their hordesmen as soon as ever they have the least suspicion of its approach, and fly, some one way, some another, in precipitate haste. Upon this occasion they travel not in a straight line, but by various meanders and windings. That this method is superstitiously observed by the Lules, Isistines, Vilelas, Homoampas, and Chunipies, I was told by Fathers who had resided long amongst them. Through fear of the contagion, fathers desert their sick sons, and sons their fathers. They leave a pitcher of water, and some roasted maize at the sick

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
814 Abipon 814

Guarani 814

A
*136 son gradually diffusing itself through all the members. It takes away the use of the foot, arm, ear, and eye on that side which has been bitten, and presently, passing to the other, causes extreme torture, continual delirium, and acute pains, especially at the extremity of the feet and hands, which contract a cadaverous paleness from being deserted by the blood, which is rendered torpid by the coldness of the venom. All this I observed in two Guarany youths who were bitten by a rattle-snake. Both were under eighteen years of age, both were robust and of strong constitutions. The first struggled with his pains twelve days, the other fourteen, at the expiration of which period they both died, the strength of the poison baffling the virtue of the most established remedies. Whenever I heard of any person's being bitten by a rattle-snake I immediately prepared him for death, by administering the sacrament to him, before the delirium began. An Indian woman, in the flower of her age and strength, was reduced to the last extremity by the pestilential bite of one of these rattle-snakes. However, to the astonishment of all, she escaped death, but having lost the use of her limbs, dragged on a miserable existence for many years.

G
[165
147]

A
000 A letter dated Williamsburg, a town of Vir-

/28 cont./

142 and owing to the fact that the women have to carry on their
182 backs all the products of the plantings, while the men who work
[147] in the yerbales /stands of yerba maté/ of Mato Grosso must carry
[482] burdens of hundreds of kilos (the cause, incidentally, of frequent
064 hernias or "ruptures"). The development of the musculature of
[535] the legs is also due in part to the almost daily dances in which all the members of the tribe participate.

163 The birth rate is quite high in all the Guaraní groups. In general a woman has ten to twelve children in the course of her life, but little more than half of them reach adulthood. There
• [165] are villages in which child mortality is as high as sixty per cent. Yet I also know an old Ñandéva woman who had ten children, eight or nine of whom reached adulthood; this, however, is an exceptional case.

842 The Guaraní woman wants to have many children. For the
[824] purpose of facilitating conception, the Kayová women drink the tea of a plant called membý djá ú djá; they say that it is sometimes enough for a woman to pass near this plant to become pregnant. There is another plant that is used to promote the conception of male children. At least the Kayová and the Ñandéva prefer male offspring.

847 Among the Kayová and Mbüá there is said to be infanticide
845 of twins, and the strangulation of crippled children is also said to occur. But, with respect to the Ñandéva, I have noticed, for instance, a couple with twin daughters, both alive and one of them crippled; at Araribá I knew a Ñandéva family with twin children of the male sex. The different attitude toward twins is based, perhaps, on the great diversity of mythical representa-
732 tions in this respect. In the Kayová villages and among the
[828] Ñandéva of Jacareí I found dull and senseless individuals, who, incidentally, were treated with special affection. The father
[842] (Kayová) presented one of them to me as Tüpã rymbá, /29/ "created by God," that is, conceived without there having been any sexual relations between the couple, and sent as a substitute for an earlier child that had died.

/39 cont./

854 855 163 [164] [536] In part the not very rational methods of raising the children are responsible for the high index of child mortality. On the occasion of journeys or celebrations, the children sleep in the open, exposed to the mist, becoming victims of grippe or pneumonia. During the dances, which extend from nightfall to the break of day, many mothers keep the infants riding on their hips, paying no attention to the violent shaking to which they expose them all night; only robust children withstand such practices. Thus cultural patterns are combined with the factors of natural selection.

515 The patterns of hygiene in force among the Guaraní are very rudimentary, which naturally promotes the spread of contagious diseases of all sorts. Ordinarily one does not see the slightest preoccupation with body cleanliness. A Mbüá from Xapecó told me [828] that "the Guaraní go about dirty, because they were really born to be poor." If there is a river close to the village, the young lads may once in a while take a bath, but solely for the purpose of cooling the body on a hot day or of having fun in the water. The Ñandéva of the coast say that, in the opinion of the "ancients," a morning bath would give "long life," a belief that, by the way, also exists in other native populations; they remember an old man who demanded that children take a bath in the river every morning, "in order to become strong," but they confess that the Guaraní of today "prefer to remain near the fire." -- The smell of sweat [147] and smoke that characterizes them has been erroneously taken for a "racial odor."

164 Health conditions are not good. In the coastal villages, for example, many suffer from malaria, venereal diseases, frequent [146] grippes, etc. The irregular diet and alcoholism reduce physical [733] resistance. The Kayová of Mato Grosso have been decimated by [751] tuberculosis, which readily spreads among them, not only because of the lack of cleanliness, but because of the custom of having many people eat at one time from the same dishes or cups, of preparing chicha (a beverage fermented with the aid of saliva) in large collective tubs, of not dispensing the chimarrão /a beverage made with maté/ and, above all, the tereré (a beverage of maté with cold water, taken by means of a suction tube), and, finally, by the nocturnal dances in the open air.